

REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

In reviewing the subject file, Applicant notes that the Examiner has not yet indicated consideration of the Submission of Priority Document filed on May 7, 2004, in which Applicant submitted a certified copy of the priority application. Applicant requests that the Examiner indicate his consideration of that document in the next official communication.

The specification has been amended to correct minor informalities and to place the application in better form. Also, a new abstract has been presented in accordance with preferred practice. No new matter is added by these changes.

Claims 8-11 and 15-32 are presented for consideration. Claims 8 and 15 are independent. Claims 1-7 and 12-14 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant reserves the right to file a continuing application directed to the subject matter of these claims. Claim 8 has been amended to clarify features of the subject invention. Support for these changes can be found in the original application, as filed. Accordingly, no new matter has been added.

Applicant notes with appreciation that claim 15-32 have been allowed over the art of record, and that claim 8 has been indicated as containing allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. To expedite allowance of this application, Applicant has so rewritten claim 8. Applicant submits, therefore, that independent claim 8, as well as claims 9-11 depending therefrom, likewise should be deemed allowable over the cited art.

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action.

Claims 1-3, 6, 10 and 12-14 [*sic* 1-3, 6 and 12-14] were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,508,695 to Tanikawa et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,430,129 to Garner. Claims 4, 5, 7 and 11 [*sic* 4, 5 and 7] were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Tanikawa et al. patent in view of the Garner patent as applied above to claims 1 and 2, and further in view of Japanese patent document number 2000-185203 to Fumio et al. Applicant submits that the cited art, whether taken individually or in combination, does not teach or suggest many features of the present invention, as previously recited in these claims. Therefore, these rejections are respectfully traversed.

Nevertheless, as discussed above, in order to expedite allowance of the instant application, claims 1-7 and 12-14 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claim 8 has been rewritten in independent form. Applicant submits, therefore, that all pending claims, namely, claims 8-11 and 15-32 are allowable, so that this application should be in condition for allowance. Such favorable indication is requested.

Applicant submits that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action and an early Notice of Allowance are also requested.

Applicant also requests that the Examiner contact his undersigned representative should any matters be deemed outstanding precluding allowance of this application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven E. Warner", is written over a horizontal line.

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